



My name is Dale Rogers and I am currently enrolled as a full time student at the Australian National University. During the period of January 2003 to December 2003 I was a recipient of the youth allowance benefits the government offers students in my situation. However, the total of \$95 (\$1.52 total youth allowance) I received per fortnight could hardly be considered beneficial by any definition of the term. As a dependent student I was reliant on my parents to contribute to my accommodation and to supplement the payments I was receiving so that I could maintain a basic standard of living.

It is clear to me that the thresholds which determine dependent youth allowance payments based on parental income are inefficient and completely ridiculous. How can a family with one parent employed full time and the other only as a casual who receive a total income at the lower end of the spectrum be expected to provide for the accommodation and basic needs of a child living away from home as well as provide for a child at home attending high school and support a grandmother and maintain a property?

Furthermore, concerning centrelink, it appears to me that the system is increasingly incompetent where students can abuse the system fraudulently to receive payments, yet those who apply in good faith and with good reason for needing benefits are denied or given menial payments such as I was.

In November of 2003 i was fortunate enough to be employed and therefore able to reduce the strain on my parents. However when university started again in February another tension arose.

For full time students who also have casual or part time jobs it seems to me that there exists a growing challenge where one cannot work if one has to go to university classes, but one cannot live and go to university if one cannot work and receive the income employment brings. Furthermore study time is hindered by this necessity to work and so the value of university in both an educational and cultural experience is undermined.

In my mind these are issues which cannot be overlooked. University is hard and made to be so, however in recent times it seems that being able to afford university is even harder and this is just the costs involved with living let alone the future debts my generation and the next will have from HECS.